



Legal Services Corporation Technology Initiative Grants

Notice

Request for Letters of Intent to Apply for 2013 Grant Funding

Issued: February 15, 2013

Letter of Intent Submission Deadline: March 18, 2013 by 11:59 p.m. EDT

Submit online at: <http://lscgrants.lsc.gov>

TIG Application Process: <http://tig.lsc.gov/grants/application-process>

**Legal Services Corporation
Technology Initiative Grant Program
Request for Letters of Intent to Apply for 2013 Grant Funding**

I. Summary

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) issues this Notice describing the conditions under which Letters of Intent will be received for the Technology Initiative Grant (TIG) program. LSC's TIG program was established in 2000. Since that time, we have made over 500 grants totaling over \$40 million. This grant program provides an important tool to help achieve LSC's goal of increasing the quantity and quality of legal services provided to eligible persons. When submitting Letters of Intent, applicants should consider the growth and continued development of technology and the resulting effects on the practice of law, program management and service delivery. Projects funded under this program develop, test and replicate innovative technologies that can enable grant recipients and state justice communities to improve clients' access to high quality legal assistance through an integrated and well managed technology system.

II. General Information

All prospective applicants for 2013 funds from the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Technology Initiative Grant (TIG) program must submit a "Letter of Intent" prior to submitting a formal application. The format and contents of the Letters of Intent should conform to the requirements specified below in Section IV.

The submission and review of Letters of Intent enables a prospective applicant to vet its project ideas with TIG staff, who can then identify those projects that have a reasonable chance of success in the competitive grant process. LSC will solicit full proposals for only those projects that have a reasonable chance of success in the grant competition process based on LSC's analysis of the information provided in the Letters of Intent.

LSC Requirements

TIG funds are subject to all the requirements of the Legal Services Corporation Act of 1974 as amended (LSC Act), any applicable appropriations acts and any other applicable law, rules, regulations, policies, guidelines, instructions, and other directives of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), including, but not limited to, LSC Audit Guide for Recipients and Auditors, the Accounting Guide for LSC Recipients (2010 Edition), the CSR Handbook (2011 Edition), the 1981 LSC Property Manual (as amended) and the Property Acquisition and Management Manual, with any amendments to the foregoing adopted before or during the period of this grant (see <http://grants.lsc.gov/rin/grantee-guidance>). Before submitting a Letter of Intent, applicants should be familiar with LSC's subgrant and transfer requirements at 45 CFR Parts 1610 and 1627 (see <http://www.lsc.gov/about/laws-regulations/lsc-regulations-cfr-45-part-1600-et-seq>), particularly as they pertain to third-party contracts to conduct programmatic activities.

For additional information and resources regarding TIG compliance, including third-party contracting, conflicts of interest, grant modification procedures, and special TIG grant assurances, see <http://tig.lsc.gov/grants/compliance>.

Eligible Organizations

Only current LSC recipients may receive a TIG award. Although other entities may not apply, they may participate as project partners. 2013 TIG awards will not be made to any applicants who have not made satisfactory progress on previous TIG awards. Applicants for 2013 TIG awards must be current with their milestone schedule on all previous TIG projects prior to submitting a Letter of Intent. If there are compelling reasons for delays in completing prior grants, recipients must work with LSC staff to secure a new milestone schedule prior to submitting a Letter of Intent. Failure to do so will disqualify their 2013 Letter of Intent submission.

LSC recipients that have had a previous TIG terminated for failure to provide timely reports and submissions are not eligible to receive a TIG for three years after their earlier grant was terminated. This policy does not apply to applicants that worked with LSC to end a TIG early after an unsuccessful project implementation resulting from technology limitations, a failed proof of concept, or other reasons outside of the applicant's control.

Funding Availability

Over the past four years, LSC has received approximately \$3.5 million per year to fund TIG projects¹. In 2012, 43 TIG projects received funding with a median funding amount of \$51,500. (See <http://tig.lsc.gov/grants/past-grant-awards> for more information on past awards.) LSC recommends a minimum amount for TIG funding requests of \$30,000, but lower requests will be considered. There is no maximum amount for TIG funding requests.

Collaborations

The TIG program encourages applicants to reach out to and include in TIG projects others interested in access to justice – the courts, bar associations, pro bono projects, libraries, and social service agencies. Partnerships can enhance the reach, effectiveness and sustainability of many projects.

Grant Categories

LSC will accept projects in two application categories:

- 1) Innovations and Improvements
- 2) Replication and Adaptation

¹ The amount of TIG funding available will depend on the 2013 fiscal year appropriation to the LSC from Congress, which had not been determined by February 15, 2013, the date this notice was issued. The federal government is currently operating under a Continuing Resolution (CR) that expires March 27, 2013. The Budget Control Act of 2011 requires sequestration to be implemented on March 1; this would impose a 5% cut on all non-defense funds, including LSC.

Grant Category 1: Innovations and Improvements

The Innovations and Improvements Category is designated for projects that: (1) implement new or innovative approaches for using technology in legal services or (2) enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of existing technologies so that they may be better used to increase the quality and quantity of services to clients.

Although there is no funding limit or matching requirement for applications in this category, additional weight is given to projects with strong support from partners. Proposals for initiatives with broad applicability and/or that would have impact throughout the legal services community are strongly encouraged. For applications that do not have broad applicability or impact, LSC will carefully consider the amount of the request and the balance of risk and reward.

Grant Category 2: Replication and Adaptation

The Replication and Adaptation category is for proposals that seek to replicate, adapt, or provide added value to the work of prior TIG projects. LSC requires that any software developed with TIG funding be available to other legal services programs at little or no cost. In 2013, LSC will continue to use a Replication Category to focus on the implementation and improvement of tested methodologies and technologies from previous TIG projects. Replication and adaptation of prior TIG projects may include, but are not limited to:

A: Replication of Previous TIG Projects

During the past thirteen years of TIG funding, there have been many successes. A list of examples of replicable projects and final reports can be found at <http://tig.lsc.gov/grants/final-reports/final-report-samples-replicable-projects>. Applicants should look to previous successful TIG projects and determine how they could be replicated at a reduced cost from the original project, and/or how they could be built upon and enhanced. Projects where software or content has already been created lend themselves to replication. Since any software developed through the TIG program is available to all LSC recipients at little or no cost, look to these projects to see how they could benefit the delivery systems in your state.

B: Automated Form Replication

LawHelp Interactive (LHI²) is now deployed in 41 states. There are over 3,000 active HotDocs templates being hosted on the LawHelp Interactive National HotDocs Server at <https://lawhelpinteractive.org>. While there are differences from state to state in the content and format, many of these forms can be edited for use in other jurisdictions with less effort, hence a lower cost, than starting from scratch.

² LHI is an automated document server powered by HotDocs Server and made available to any LSC funded program at no charge. See <https://lawhelpinteractive.org>.

In addition to these templates, the server hosts more than 1,000 A2J interviews to gather the information needed to complete the templates. Even if a form differs from one state to another, the information needed to populate a form will, for the most part, be similar. (What are the names of the plaintiff, the defendant, the children, etc.) This means the interviews are more easily replicated than templates.

All of these templates and interviews are available to be modified as needed. Applicants should identify which forms and templates are to be adapted, and then estimate the cost to do this and how much that would save over doing them from scratch.

LHI has the capacity to support Spanish language interviews and assemblies, and recently added support for Vietnamese and Mandarin interviews. LHI will be adding support for Korean interviews in 2013. For additional information, including examples, best practices, models and training materials, see the LawHelp Interactive Resource Center, hosted by Pro Bono Net at <http://www.probono.net/dasupport> (you may need to request a free membership to access this website).

III. Areas of Interest

LSC welcomes applications for a wide variety of projects. For 2013, LSC has three areas of particular interest in which programs are encouraged to submit proposals for innovative technology approaches. The designation of these areas does not in any way limit the scope of proposals in which LSC is interested. The 2013 areas of particular interest are:

A. Key Initiatives from LSC's 2012-2013 Summit on the Use of Technology to Expand Access to Justice.

- **Document Assembly** – See Grant Category 2: Replication and Adaptation
- **Remote Service Delivery** – Remote delivery of legal services can reduce the costs of connecting attorneys and paralegals to clients and improve the likelihood that low-income people will receive high-quality legal assistance regardless of their location. Additionally, Americans have become more accustomed to online service delivery in areas such as banking, shopping, and support services. Recognizing this change, LSC seeks proposals to develop new and creative systems that would promote the delivery of remote legal services efficiently and effectively. It encourages organizations to explore private bar innovations -- such as virtual law office (VLO) platforms -- and advances seen in the medical field, where providers increasingly utilize patient portals and telemedicine in their practices.
- **Mobile Technologies** – Services and assistance that can be delivered to or using mobile devices like smartphones and tablets. For many clients, a cellphone may be their only dedicated Internet access point and is likely the technology with which they are most familiar. According to a 2012 Pew survey, this is particularly true for people “under the age of 30, Black and Latino users, and people with lower income and education levels.” Proposals could address the use of text messaging, responsive web designs to deliver content to mobile devices, specialized apps or tools for use on smartphones or ways to better integrate the use of mobile technologies in the delivery of legal services by advocates.

- **Expert Systems and Checklists** – “Expert systems” emulate the decision-making ability of human experts. In legal services, these systems can be used to help self-represented litigants navigate an unfamiliar legal process or support legal services professionals by augmenting existing systems and practice tools. Such systems can be envisioned for a wide variety of topics including, for example, benefits entitlement, identification of necessary forms and procedures, alternative approaches to problem solutions, and preventive law. One subset of expert systems, dynamic, interactive checklists, guide clients and advocates through the steps in processes such as initiating or responding to court actions and dealing with government agencies. Expert system applications include those that assist lawyers in analyzing complex but recurring fact/law situations; thus prompting collection of all relevant information and provision of a tentative legal rights diagnoses. To learn more about the use of expert systems and see some examples, you may go to: <http://tig.lsc.gov/guidance-expert-systems>.
- **Triage** – Triage systems are online assessment tools used to direct users to the most appropriate available resources to address their legal needs. These systems ask the user questions to determine such factors as the level of assistance needed, the abilities of the user, and whether or not any opposing party is represented. Using logic built into the system by the designers, the user is then directed to the most appropriate resource available. (These resources may include self-help materials on a website, the legal aid program’s intake portal (online or hotline), or a referral to a pro bono project, court self-help center, government agency, or a social services organization.) So that the service options will be as broad as possible, ideally such a system will be a collaboration among as many access to justice partners as possible, such as legal aid programs, the courts, and the private bar.

- B. Leveraging Technology to Increase Pro Bono Attorney and Law Student Involvement.** Engagement of pro bono attorneys is a valuable and essential resource for increasing the supply of advocates and meeting the increased demand for provision of legal services to low income persons. Many state justice communities have urged attorneys to get more involved in pro bono efforts, and some have suggested that particular categories of attorneys, such as retiring or retired lawyers, in-house counsel and recent graduates, are well-poised to expand access to justice in their states. In addition, many law students have a strong interest in providing legal help to those in need. As discussed in LSC’s recently released [Report of the Pro Bono Task Force](#), information technology can play an important role in recruiting pro bono attorneys and law students and providing them the tools necessary to effectively meet the legal needs of clients. LSC seeks proposals for projects that leverage creative uses of technology to enhance pro bono attorney and law student involvement.
- C. Use of Data to Analyze Service Delivery and Develop Advocacy Strategies.** Recipients are increasingly recognizing that more effective use of a wide range of data can enable them to better identify: 1) current and emerging needs of their client communities; 2) patterns of service delivery by case type, level of service or demographics of clients; and 3) outcomes achieved for clients. Data analysis can

assist in developing specially tailored advocacy and service delivery strategies that more effectively address the most pressing legal needs and achieve the greatest outcomes for clients. Valuable data are available from a range of federal, state and local government agencies, as well as academic institutions, policy groups and other non-profits. LSC encourages initiatives that enable recipients, by themselves or in partnership with other entities, to use technologies to more readily identify, compile and employ data in ways that improve the responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency of services provided to clients. LSC also encourages projects that systematically evaluate and document the ways and extent to which technologies funded through TIG and other sources affect the quality and quantity of client services and/or the effectiveness and efficiency of program operations. The focus of such analyses might include, but are not limited to, pro se forms and resources, mobile applications, intake systems, and video-conferencing.

IV. Specific Letter of Intent Requirements

One Project Per Letter of Intent

Applicants may submit multiple Letters of Intent, but a separate letter of intent should be submitted for each project for which funding is sought.

Letter Requirements and Format

The Letter of Intent must be submitted using an online system that can be found at <http://lscgrants.lsc.gov>. Additional instructions and information can be found on the TIG website at <http://tig.lsc.gov/grants/application-process>. This system will walk you through the process of creating a simple two page Letter of Intent. The Letter of Intent should concisely provide the following information about the proposed project:

1. **Category** – select the appropriate category from the drop down list.
2. **Description of Project (maximum 2500 characters)** - Briefly describe the basic elements of the project, including the specific technology(ies) the project will develop or implement; how they will be developed, how they will operate, the function they will serve within the legal services delivery system, their expected impact, and other similar factors. (Only the impact should be highlighted here; more details about the system's benefits should be provided below.)
3. **Major Benefits (maximum 2500 characters)** - Describe the specific ways in which the project will increase or improve services to clients and/or enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of program operations. To the extent feasible, discuss both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of these benefits.
4. **Estimated Costs (maximum 1500 characters)** - Start by stating the amount of funding you are seeking from the TIG program, followed by the estimated total project cost, summarizing the anticipated costs of the major components of the project. List anticipated contributions, both in-kind and monetary, of all partners involved in the project.

5. **Major Partners (maximum 1500 characters)** - Identify organizations that are expected to be important partners. Specify the role(s) each partner will play.
6. **Innovation/Replication/Sustainability (maximum 1500 characters)** - Identify how and why the proposed project is new and innovative. Identify how and why the proposed project can significantly benefit and/or be replicated by other legal services providers and/or the community at large. Identify how the proposed project will be maintained to ensure sustainability.

Letter of Intent Deadline

Letters of Intent must be completed and submitted into the online system at <http://lscgrants.lsc.gov> no later than **11:59 p.m. EDT, Monday, March 18, 2013**. The online system may experience technical difficulties due to heavy traffic on the day of the deadline. Applicants are strongly encouraged to complete their Letter of Intent submissions as early as possible.

LSC will not accept applications submitted after the application deadline unless a waiver of the deadline has been approved in advance (see Waiver Authority). Therefore, allow sufficient time for online submission.

LSC will provide confirmation via email upon the completed electronic submission of each Letter of Intent. Keep this email as verification that the program's LOI was submitted. If no confirmation email is received, inquire about the status of your LOI at Techgrants@lsc.gov.

Selection Process

LSC will initially review all Letters of Intent to determine whether they conform to the required format and clearly present all of the required elements. These requirements are listed and described above. Failure to meet these requirements may result in rejection of the Letter of Intent.

Each proposal will be reviewed to identify those Letters of Intent that propose projects likely to improve access to justice or the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of legal services provided by grantees. The Letters of Intent will be reviewed to determine the extent to which the project proposed is clearly described and well thought out, offers major benefits to our targeted client community, is cost effective, involves all of the parties needed to make it successful and sustainable, and is either innovative or a cost effective replication of prior successful projects. Those that do will be invited to submit full applications.

Next Steps for Successful Applicants

LSC will notify successful Letter of Intent applicants by Tuesday, April 30, 2013. Successful applicants will have until 11:59 p.m. EDT, Monday, June 17, 2013 to complete full applications in the online application system.

Waiver Authority

Under extraordinary circumstances and when it is in the best interest of the eligible client community, LSC, upon its own initiative or when requested, may waive provisions in this Notice at its sole discretion. Waivers may only be granted for requirements that are discretionary and not mandated by statute or regulation. Any request for a waiver must set forth the extraordinary circumstances for the request and be included in the application. LSC will not consider a request to waive the deadline for a Letter of Intent unless the waiver request is received by LSC prior to the deadline.

Contact Information

For information on the status of a current TIG project, contact **Eric Mathison**, Program Analyst, Telephone: 202-295-1535; Email: emathison@lsc.gov.

For questions about projects in CT, DC, IL, IN, ME, MA, MI, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, WI, WV, VT, contact **David Bonebrake**, Program Counsel, Telephone: 202.295.1547; Email: dbonebrake@lsc.gov.

For questions about projects in AK, AZ, CA, CO, GU, HI, ID, IA, KS, MP, MN, MT, NE, NV, NH, NM, ND, OK, OR, SD, TX, UT, WA, WY, contact **Glenn Rawdon**, Program Counsel, Telephone: 202.295.1552; Email: gawdon@lsc.gov.

For questions about projects in AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, MO, NC, PR, SC, TN, VI, VA, contact **Jane Ribadeneyra**, Program Analyst, Telephone: 202.295.1554, Email: ribadeneyraj@lsc.gov.

If you have a general question, please email techgrants@lsc.gov.